



April 2003

## **Gender Equity In Higher Education Update: Western Washington University's Plan For Athletics**

### **Background**

Established by the federal government in 1972, Title IX bans gender discrimination in schools, encompassing both athletics and academics. In Washington State, two laws related to Title IX were passed in 1989 aimed at achieving gender equity in higher education.

The first law (RCW 28.110) prohibits discrimination based on gender in student services and support, in academic programs, and athletics. The second law (RCW 28B15.460) authorizes four-year institutions to use tuition waivers to achieve gender equity in intercollegiate athletics, but only if they meet "proportionality" goals.

By June 30, 2002, female athletic participation was required to be within five percentage points of female enrollment (for full-time undergraduates, age 17-24 on main campus).

Institutions not meeting that goal are required to submit a plan outlining how they will come into compliance. The Board is required to report to the legislature every four years on institutional compliance and progress toward meeting gender equity goals.

In July 2002, a gender equity update report using preliminary data found equitable athletic participation at all institutions except Eastern Washington University, which reported a gap of 16 percent. Eastern submitted a plan to achieve gender equity for the 2003-04 academic year, which was approved by Board Resolution No. 02-24. Western Washington University's participation rate was close to non-compliance but still within an acceptable level, at 4.9 percent.

The Board used finalized 2001-02 data for its report to the legislature in December of 2002. At Western Washington University, the gap between female athletic participation and female undergraduate enrollment was found to have increased from 4.9 percent to 5.6 percent<sup>1</sup> – exceeding the statutory limit, and requiring a new plan for academic year 2003-04.

---

<sup>1</sup> 51.1 percent of athletes were female (Source: 2001-02 EADA survey) and 56.7 percent of full-time undergraduates age 17 to 24 were female (Source: IPEDS Fall 2001 Enrollment by Age and Gender).

### Western Washington University's Gender Equity Plan for Athletics

Since 2001-02, Western's female undergraduate population has increased from 56.7 percent to 57.6 percent<sup>2</sup>. Females must therefore comprise at least 52.6 percent of all athletes in order to meet the statutory goal.

Through roster management, Western reports that it has achieved equity in athletics for the 2002-03 academic year, as follows:

Sport	2001-02 Number of Participants		2002-03 Number of Participants		Change	
	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women
Basketball	12	10	12	13	0	3
Football	66	0	68	0	2	0
Golf	9	8	6	9	-3	1
Rowing	0	41	0	48	0	7
Soccer	21	17	21	22	0	5
Softball	0	17	0	17	0	0
Cross Country	17	24	13	24	-4	0
Outdoor Track & Field	53	57	56	66	3	9
Volleyball	0	12	0	12	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>178</b>	<b>186</b>	<b>176</b>	<b>211</b>	<b>-2</b>	<b>25</b>
<b>Percentage Female Athletes</b>		<b>51.1%</b>		<b>54.5%</b>		<b>3.4%</b>

Roster size has increased by 25 female athletes and decreased by 2 male athletes, bringing female athletic participation to 54.5 percent. Because 57.6 percent of the full-time undergraduate population (age 17-24) is female, the gap between female enrollment and athletic participation is now 3.1 percent, within the five percent variance allowed by RCW 28B.15.460.

Western plans to ensure compliance in future seasons by carefully managing rosters of current sports, endeavoring to increase opportunities for women while maintaining the number of roster sports for men.

<sup>2</sup> IPEDS Preliminary Fall 2002 Enrollment by Age and Gender as of April 2, 2003.

**RESOLUTION NO. 03-10**

WHEREAS, RCW 28B.110.040 and RCW 28B 15.465 require the Higher Education Coordinating Board to report every four years to the Legislature and Governor on gender equity in higher education, and to develop rules and guidelines to eliminate gender discrimination; and

WHEREAS, The Higher Education Coordinating Board, with the assistance of the state's public higher education institutions, has completed its 2002 review of gender equity in public higher education; and

WHEREAS, State law authorizes the use of tuition and fee waivers to achieve gender equity in intercollegiate athletics; and

WHEREAS, By June 2002, all institutions were to achieve a rate of female athletic participation within five percentage points of the representation of female students between the ages of 17 and 24 enrolled full-time on the main campus; and

WHEREAS, Any institution that was not within the five percent requirement is to have a new plan achieving gender equity in intercollegiate athletic programs approved by the Higher Education Coordinating Board before granting further tuition and fee waivers after the 2002-03 academic year; and

WHEREAS, Eastern Washington University failed to meet the five percent standard and has since submitted a plan approved by the Board; and

WHEREAS, Western Washington University failed to meet the five percent standard but has since met the standard for the 2002-03 academic year and plans to ensure compliance through continued roster management in future seasons;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, That the Higher Education Coordinating Board approves Western Washington University's gender equity plan for athletics.

Adopted:

April 23, 2003

Attest:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Bob Craves, Chair

\_\_\_\_\_  
Pat Stanford, Secretary